

# COMMUNITY REPORTING

Gathering, curating and mobilising stories of lived experience



# WHAT IS COMMUNITY REPORTING?

Community Reporting is a storytelling movement that was started in 2007 by People's Voice Media, and it uses digital tools to support people to tell their own stories in their own ways. Central to Community Reporting is the belief that people telling authentic stories about their own lived experience offers a valuable understanding of their lives. Through creating spaces in which people can describe their own realities, Community Reporting provides opportunities in which people can use storytelling to:

1. Find their voice
2. Challenge perceptions
3. Be catalysts of change

We believe in achieving positive change for communities by bringing peoples' portrayals of lived experiences together to influence change from the ground up via Community Reporting methodologies. Community Reporting has three distinct components – story gathering, story curation and story mobilisation – based around the Cynefin decision-making framework for complex environments (David Snowden, 1999). Through gathering, curating and mobilising stories from our growing network of Community Reporters, we seek to inform policy, processes and practice.

[Click here](#) to visit the Community Reporter website and listen to our stories.

## COMMUNITY REPORTING CYCLE

### Gathering Stories (probing)

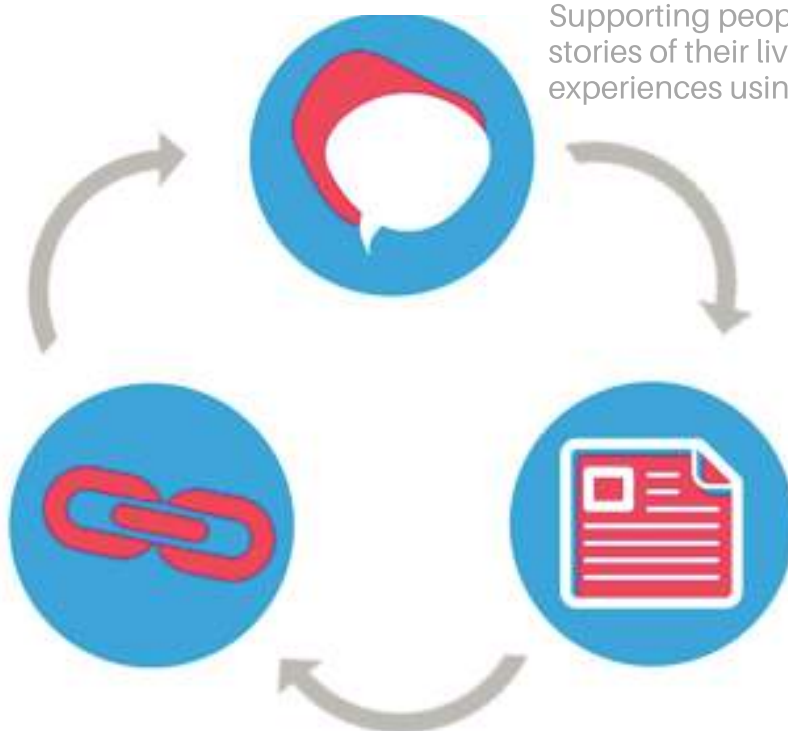
Supporting people to tell stories of their lived experiences using digital tools.

### Curating Stories (sense-making)

Supporting people to analyse their stories and package the findings as digital outputs.

### Mobilising Stories (responding)

Supporting people to connect the learning in their stories to people in a position to use it to make positive social change.



# STORY GATHERING

To gather stories, we have three interlinked models of Community Reporting – Storytelling, Co-Production and Insight. Community Reporting for Storytelling provides people with the knowledge and skills to become responsible storytellers and to have their say on the issues and topics that are pertinent to them. Community Reporting for Co-Production uses different forms of digital media to present a range of perspectives on a subject matter, creating a dialogue between various points of view on a topic. Community Reporting for Insight uses people’s experiences to provide rich qualitative data to projects, taking the insights from their stories to identify themes, inform findings of wider studies and positively impact on local agendas, policies and service design.

## STORY GATHERING MODELS



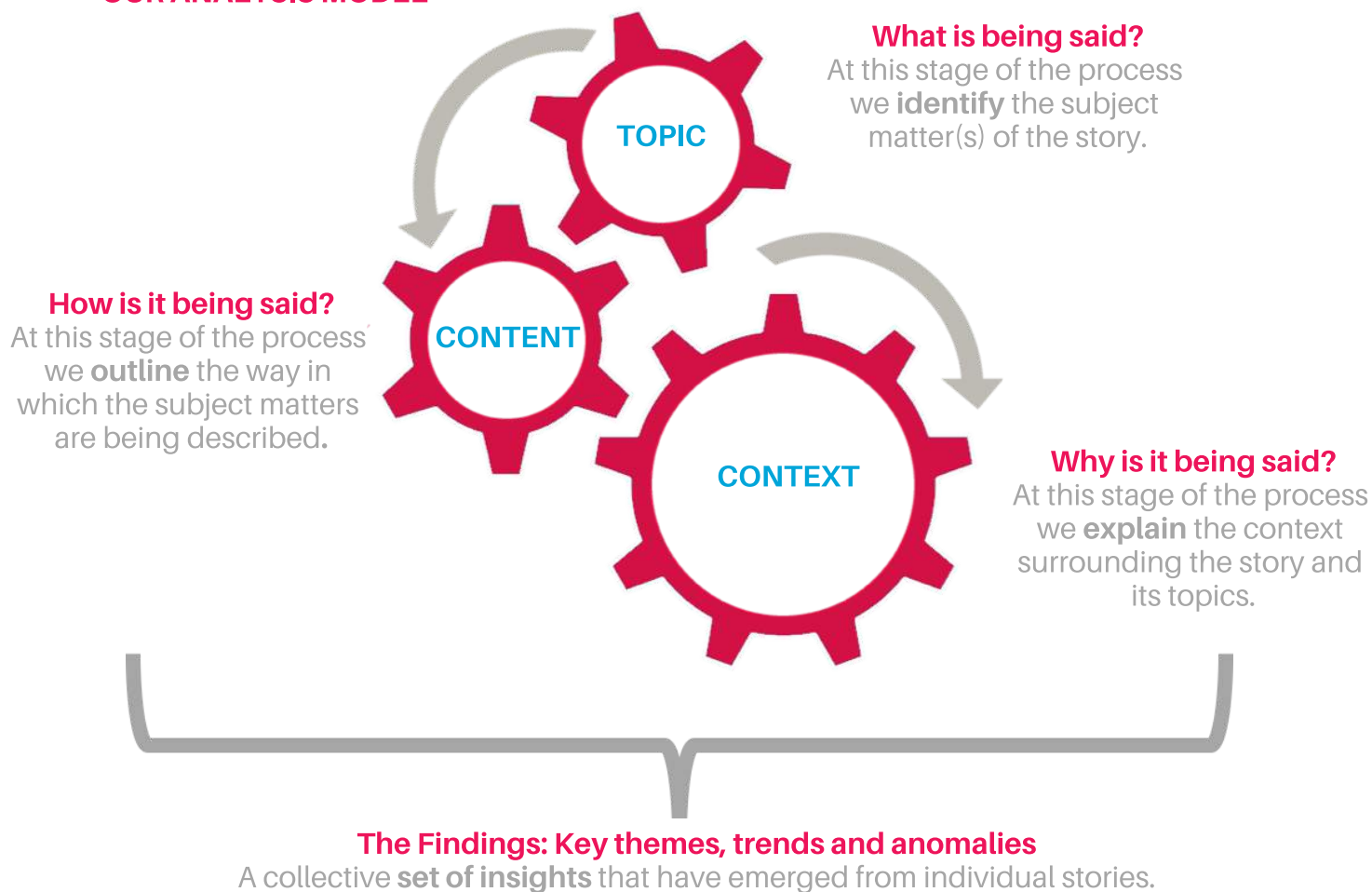
In order to ensure that we have a degree of consistency within our practice of Community Reporting, learning about responsible storytelling is embedded into all of our programmes. Through this our Community Reporters explore the ethics and values of Community Reporting and co-create their own best practice guide.

[Click here](#) to find out more about our story gathering practices.

# STORY CURATION

When we use the expression – curated stories – we use it as an umbrella term for a layered analysis process that is accompanied by a series of packaging activities in order to present back the key findings across a collection of individual stories.

## OUR ANALYSIS MODEL



There are three stages in the analysis process through which a set of findings emerge. The first stage of the process is the 'Topic' level and this stage is concerned with identifying the subject matter(s) in a story. The second stage of the process is the 'Content' level and this stage is concerned with outlining the way in which the subject matters are being described. The third stage of the process is the 'Context' level and this stage of analysis is concerned with explaining the wider context in which story is being told. This process results in the identification and understanding of a key set of themes, trends and anomalies from a collection of stories that can be synthesised into a collective set of insights.

This synthesis is then communicated via the packaged products in succinct and easily accessible and shareable ways, such as creating short film, interactive reports, toolkits, geo-maps, presentations and much more.

[Click here](#) to find out more about our story curation practices.

# STORY MOBILISATION

Story mobilisation processes connect the learning from stories to people, groups and organisations who are in a position to use this knowledge to create positive change. There are many ways in which we mobilise the findings from our stories and curated content, both online and offline. This can include devising social media campaigns, running presentation of findings events and participatory workshops, delivering papers at conferences and symposiums, creating dissemination strategies for online distributions via websites and emails, adopting grassroots, alternative strategies and much more.

## CONVERSATION OF CHANGE EVENTS

A key aspect of our story mobilisation processes are Conversation of Change events. Conversation of Change events use Community Reporter stories and other stimuli to prompt a dialogue between various stakeholders that seeks to catalyse change. When we talk about dialogue we mean the sharing of understandings, learnings and ideas.

Essentially, we are talking about a knowledge exchange process that can create new ways of thinking and doing things. The purpose of these events can vary, and can be used to help to kick-start co-design processes, create toolkits, identify ways that services can be improved, generate policy recommendations and galvanise ideas for local solutions to neighbourhood challenges.



[Click here](#) to find out more about our story mobilisation practices.

# OUR SERVICES

Through Community Reporting, we provide services that enable voices to be heard in order to influence change and inform practices, processes and policies. The practice of Community Reporting can be used as:

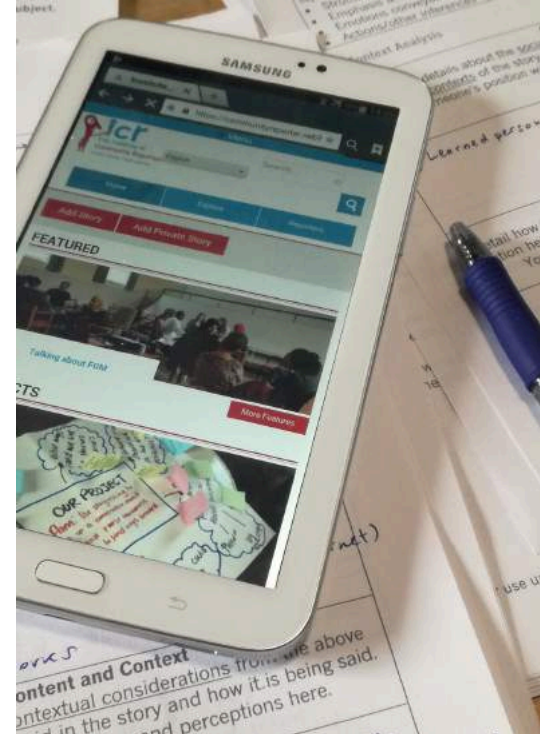
- A research methodology
- A co-creation practice
- An insight tool
- An evaluation approach
- A dialogue creator
- A community/organisation development apparatus
- A professional practice
- A digital inclusion training programme

[Click here](#) to find out more about our services, or to find out more about how Community Reporting can be used, take a look through the case studies below.

## CO-CREATING PUBLIC SERVICES

The [CoSIE Horizon 2020 project](#) supports the creation of collaborative partnerships between service providers (i.e. public sector agencies, third sector organizations, private companies) and service beneficiaries (i.e. citizens). Its goal is to research, through practical application processes, how public services can be enhanced via co-creation.

People's Voice Media has worked with the 10 public service pilots and 10 academic partners to use Community Reporting as a tool for co-creation. This work has taken place across 10 European countries and sought to explore how storytelling can support dialogue amongst different stakeholders to enhance service provision. As part of this project, we've worked with probation services in the UK, unemployment provision in Spain, rural development initiatives in Estonia and many more, to use insight storytelling strategies combined with curation and story mobilisation processes to bring user voice to decision-making processes and make public services better for the people who access them. This has included producing [reports](#), [toolkits](#) and edit [videos](#) for dissemination.



## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN RESEARCH PROJECTS

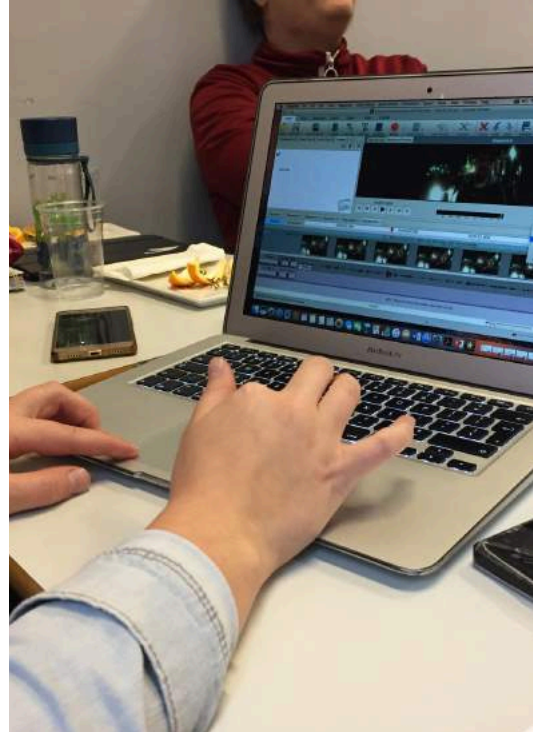
The **European Cohort Development Project (ECDP)** is a Design Study which will create the specification and business case for a European Research Infrastructure that will provide, over the next 25 years, comparative longitudinal survey data on child and young adult well-being. The infrastructure developed by ECDP will subsequently coordinate the first Europe wide cohort survey, which we name EuroCohort.

People's Voice Media has worked with children and young people in the UK and Croatia to train them as Community Reporters and support them to explore what the concept of 'wellbeing' meant to them. Using the stories, the children and young people helped us to ascertain a set of key findings on wellbeing from the stories that is being used as a sense-check tools within the design of the survey. As part of this project, we've also created a toolkit for how storytelling can be used to engage children and young people in research projects.

## EXPLORING TABOO ISSUES

The 'Tacking FGM' project was run by The Gathering Ground and a local FGM Community Association. Through their work they had observed that FGM was difficult to talk about within affected communities and that any work by the law or statutory bodies would lack impact as the practise is only driven further underground. This project sought to overcome these issues and find new ways to address the issue at a local level.

People's Voice Media trained people from affected communities as Community Reporters and worked with them to gather stories from a wide range of people that covered a diverse range of perspectives and understandings of FGM. We then co-curated the stories into **a short film** with the Reporters and created a knowledge mobilisation plan based on the creation of a website and grassroots engagement techniques to support them to make change at a local level.



## SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO HAVE A VOICE

Community Led Initiatives and a group of people who were overcoming or had overcome addiction issues were keen to use storytelling to help communicate what supports people on their recovery journey.

People's Voice Media worked with the group to train them as Community Reporters and support them to use these skills to gather people's stories of addiction and how they have or are trying to overcome it. These powerful stories were edited into a short film with the group of Reporters that pulled out some of the core themes from the stories they'd gathered. The group are using the film to try to dispel the stigma around addiction and bring about changes in social attitudes towards people who have addiction issues.

## RESEARCHING SOCIAL INVESTMENT & INNOVATION

The **INNOSI project** asked how we can design robust social investment strategies which can deal with emerging socio-economic challenges and the aftershocks of the 2008 economic crisis. The research identified innovative approaches to social investment at national and regional levels across 10 European countries.

People's Voice Media led a work package that used Community Reporting for Insight practices to capture 'User Voice' stories on the topics and themes from the social investment case studies being examined in the project. As part of the project, we trained 100 Community Reporters and 25 Insight Advocate Trainers to provide on-going support for the new Community Reporters, and gathered 118 stories from across 10 different European countries. These were curated into an **interactive geo-map**, multimedia report and thematic videos and feature stories.

## UNEARTHING OUR HIDDEN HERITAGE

**NHS at 70: The Story of our Lives** is a Heritage Lottery Fund supported project at the University of Manchester marking the 70th anniversary of the NHS through capturing people's stories for their new digital archive. The project looks at people's experience of the NHS throughout the last 7 decades.





As part of this project, we trained young people aged 13 – 21 in Trafford and Bridgend as Silver Community Reporters and tasked them with gathering stories around the topic of the NHS. The stories they collected covered topics such as accessing NHS services, support with lifelong health conditions, stories about working for the NHS, stories about people’s family members and their experience of the NHS, and stories about finding other health support outside of the NHS. The stories were edited into short films and used in a pop-up exhibition to promote the project.

## SUPPORTING TRANSITIONS IN HEALTHCARE

This project was commissioned from [Advancing Quality Alliance \(AQuA\)](#) whose aim is to transform health and care quality. AQuA and 10 teams from 7 organisations took part in a 2-year Health Foundation funded programme – “Reducing harm in transition between children and adult services”.

People’s Voice Media delivered 7 Community Reporting projects which trained young people as Silver Community Reporters, and during their training they used different storytelling practices and Community Reporting techniques to help to shed light on different healthcare transition process. These findings were presented as a series of short films such as this one on [learning disabilities services](#) and this one on [mental health provision](#).

## CREATING POLICY RECCOMENDATIONS

[The VOICITYS project](#) aims to improve social integration through reinforcing social dialogue and communication in European urban neighbourhoods characterised by diversity.

People’s Voice Media led a research stream that used Community Reporting methodologies to gather and curate stories of lived experiences from residents of Berlin, Budapest, Salford and Sassari. These have been analysed and curated into an [interactive report](#) and summative films. These findings were used as part of Conversation of Change event across Europe that support communities to generate ideas for policy recommendations and how they could implemented at a local level.



# OUR IMPACT



Our vision is to change the world, one story at a time. We seek to make positive social change at three distinct yet interconnected levels:

- **Individual (ideologies and behaviours)** - For example, a person could change their perception of a topic or a professional could change their practice.
- **Organisational (delivery and spaces)** - For example, an organisation may change the ways it does things or a service or space could be re-designed, re-purposed or co-created from scratch.
- **Systemic (society and culture)** - For example, a policy could be amended or be written, practice could change across a whole sector or social norms may change.

Through our social impact measurement framework and annual reports, we account for our activities and also use this evaluation process to support the strategic of our storytelling movement.

# THE INSTITUTE OF COMMUNITY REPORTERS

The Institute of Community Reporters (ICR) was founded by People's Voice Media in 2012 and is the overarching entity that supports the Community Reporter movement. The movement currently spans mainly across the UK and Europe. The ICR's acknowledges the achievements of our members via a badging system and quality assures Community Reporting practices across the network. People, groups and organisations can join our network as:

- **Community Reporters:** People who contribute to the network by sharing stories on [www.communityreporter.net](http://www.communityreporter.net).
- **Trainers and Digital Curators:** People who the ICR has approved to deliver Community Reporting training programmes and story curation activities.
- **Social Licensees:** Individuals, groups and organisations who have a license agreement in place for them to conduct Community Reporting activities outside of People's Voice Media's scope of work.
- **Partners:** Individuals, groups and organisations who we work with to deliver collaborative projects, share knowledge and develop new practices, methodologies and training materials.

If you're interested in joining our storytelling movement, then get in touch on [enquiries@peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk) or [click here](#) to find out more about the ICR.



# GET IN TOUCH

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